



Virginia  
Regulatory  
Town Hall

## Notice of Intended Regulatory Action Agency Background Document

<b>Agency Name:</b>	State Water Control Board - Agency 25
<b>VAC Chapter Number:</b>	260
<b>Regulation Title:</b>	Water Quality Standards
<b>Action Title:</b>	Water Quality Standards Amendments Updating Certain Criteria and Use Designations
<b>Date:</b>	May 23, 2000

This information is required prior to the submission to the Registrar of Regulations of a Notice of Intended Regulatory Action (NOIRA) pursuant to the Administrative Process Act § 9-6.14:7.1 (B). Please refer to Executive Order Twenty-Five (98) and Executive Order Fifty-Eight (99) for more information.

### Purpose\*

*Please describe the subject matter and intent of the planned regulation. This description should include a brief explanation of the need for and the goals of the new or amended regulation.*

The purpose of the rulemaking will be to amend the Water Quality Standards regulation to update certain criteria and use designations. Subject areas needing revision include updated surface water criteria for ammonia in freshwater, new alternative indicators for assessing bacterial water quality, updated contact recreational use designations for primary and secondary and/or seasonal uses, and updated use designations for intermittent, ephemeral and/or effluent dependent streams. DEQ also wants to review the existing shellfish classification in tidal waters to determine whether separate classifications/designations and criteria are needed for permanently restricted or prohibited shellfishing areas vs. open shellfishing areas.

The intent of this rulemaking is to protect designated and beneficial uses of state waters by adopting regulations that are technically correct, necessary and reasonable. These standards will be used in setting Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit limits and for evaluating the waters of the Commonwealth for inclusion in the Clean Water Act 305(b) report and on the 303(d) list. Waters not meeting standards will require development of a Total Maximum Daily Load under the Clean Water Act at 303(d).

**Basis**

*Please identify the state and/or federal source of legal authority to promulgate the contemplated regulation. The discussion of this authority should include a description of its scope and the extent to which the authority is mandatory or discretionary. The correlation between the proposed regulatory action and the legal authority identified above should be explained. Full citations of legal authority and, if available, web site addresses for locating the text of the cited authority must be provided.*

---

The scope of the Federal regulations at 40 CFR 131 is to describe the requirements and procedures for developing, reviewing, revising and approving water quality standards by the States as authorized by section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act. 40 CFR 131 specifically requires the states to adopt criteria to protect designated uses.

The scope and objective of the Clean Water Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. The Clean Water Act at 303(c)(1) requires that the states hold public hearings for the purpose of reviewing applicable water quality standards and, as appropriate, modifying and adopting standards.

The scope and purpose of the State Water Control Law is to protect and to restore the quality of state waters, to safeguard the clean waters from pollution, to prevent and to reduce pollution and to promote water conservation. The State Water Control Law (Code of Virginia) at §62.1-44.15(3a) requires the Board to establish standards of quality and to modify, amend or cancel any such standards or policies. It also requires the Board to hold public hearings from time to time for the purpose of reviewing the water quality standards, and, as appropriate, adopting, modifying or canceling such standards.

The authority to adopt standards as provided by the provisions in the previously referenced citations is mandated, although the specific standards to be adopted or modified are discretionary to the EPA and the state.

Federal Regulation web site:

<http://www.epa.gov/epahome/cfr40.htm>

Clean Water Act web site:

<http://www4.law.cornell.edu/uscode/33/1313.html>

State Water Control Law (Code of Virginia) web site:

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+62.1-44.2>

<http://leg1.state.va.us/cgi-bin/legp504.exe?000+cod+62.1-44.15>

**Need\***

*Please detail the specific reasons the agency has determined that the proposed regulatory action would be essential to protect the health, safety or welfare of citizens. In addition, a statement delineating any potential issues that may need to be addressed as the regulation is developed shall be supplied*

---

This rulemaking is needed because new scientific information is available to update the water quality standards. Changes to the regulation are also needed to improve permitting, monitoring and assessment programs. Subject areas needing revision include updated surface water criteria for ammonia in freshwater, new alternative indicators for assessing bacterial water quality, updated contact recreational use designations for primary and secondary and/or seasonal uses, and updated use designations for intermittent, ephemeral and/or effluent dependent streams. DEQ also wants to consider revising the existing DEQ shellfish classification in tidal waters to determine whether separate classifications/designations and criteria are needed for permanently restricted or prohibited shellfishing areas.

The rulemaking is essential to the protection of health, safety or welfare of the citizens of the Commonwealth. Proper water quality standards protect water quality and living resources of Virginia's waters for consumption of fish and shellfish, recreational uses and conservation in general.

Potential issues that may need to be addressed are listed in the alternatives section. Another issue that may need to be addressed is how these water quality standards changes will effect the 303(d) listing of state waters and subsequent TMDL development.

**Substance\***

*Please detail any changes that would be implemented: this discussion should include a summary of the proposed regulatory action where a new regulation is being promulgated; where existing provisions of a regulation are being amended, the statement should explain how the existing regulation will be changed.*

---

The amendments would change the existing numerical criteria for ammonia and bacteria in certain waters of the state. The existing regulation may also be changed to reflect more accurate designated or beneficial uses of state waters to ensure the correct application of the new criteria. The regulation may also be changed to recognize that intermittent, ephemeral and/or effluent dependent waters do not support all designated uses, particularly aquatic life uses. Also, the regulation may be changed to recognize restricted or prohibited shellfishing areas and define alternate criteria for these waters.

**Alternatives\***

*Please describe the process by which the agency has considered, or will consider, less burdensome and less intrusive alternatives for achieving the need. Also describe, to the extent known, the specific alternatives to the proposal that have been considered or will be considered to meet the essential purpose of the action, and the reasoning by which the agency has rejected any of the alternatives considered.*

---

Many alternatives in the subject areas listed will become available as DEQ staff and the public begin to review scientific data, permitting and monitoring needs. DEQ will work in conjunction with other state and federal agencies to consider various alternatives. Alternatives provided by the public will also be considered.

The Department has neither accepted nor rejected any alternatives at this point. Some alternatives being considered by the agency now include, but are not limited to, the following:

- whether to use enterococci, E. coli, and/or fecal coliforms as a bacterial indicator of pollution, what these numerical values should be and how and where we should apply these criteria,
- whether we should recognize primary and secondary contact and/or seasonal recreational uses, how these uses should be defined and what criteria would apply,
- whether we should recognize the limited aquatic life and recreational uses of intermittent streams, ephemeral streams and dry ditches, how these types of streams would be defined, what criteria should apply here, and/or whether any temporary variances that have been approved by DEQ in intermittent streams should be adopted as permanent use changes,
- whether effluent dependent streams should be protected as fully supporting aquatic life uses or be protected as intermittent streams, ephemeral streams or dry ditches (see above),
- whether information contained in EPA's 1998 Update of Ambient Water Quality Criteria for Ammonia (EPA 822-R-98-008) should be used to recalculate the freshwater ammonia criteria, and
- whether we should divide shellfish waters into two classifications (open shellfishing areas vs. prohibited areas) and whether alternate criteria should apply here.

### Public Participation\*

*Please indicate the agency is seeking comments on the intended regulatory action, to include ideas to assist the agency in the development of the proposal and the costs and benefits of the alternatives stated in this notice or other alternatives. Also indicate whether a public meeting is to be held to receive comments on this notice. Indicate that 1) the agency is not holding a meeting because the agency has authorized proceeding without holding a meeting or 2) the agency is holding a meeting. If a public meeting is to be held, indicate where information on the public meeting (i.e., date, time and place) may be found.*

The Board is seeking comments on the intended regulatory action, including ideas to assist in the development of a proposal and the costs and benefits of the alternatives stated in this notice or other alternatives. A public meeting will be held and notice of the meeting can be found in the Calendar of Events section of the Virginia Register of Regulations.

### Participatory Approach\*

*Please indicate the extent to which an ad hoc advisory group will be used in the development of the proposed regulation. Indicate that 1) the agency is not using the participatory approach in the development of the proposal because the agency has authorized proceeding without using the participatory approach; 2) the agency is using the participatory approach in the development of the*

*proposal; or 3) the agency is inviting comment on whether to use the participatory approach to assist the agency in the development of a proposal.*

---

The Board seeks comment from the public on whether to use the participatory approach to assist the agency in the development of a proposal.

### Family Impact Statement

*Please provide a preliminary analysis of the potential impact of the proposed regulatory action on the institution of the family and family stability including to what extent the regulatory action will: 1) strengthen or erode the authority and rights of parents in the education, nurturing, and supervision of their children; 2) encourage or discourage economic self-sufficiency, self-pride, and the assumption of responsibility for oneself, one's spouse, and one's children and/or elderly parents; 3) strengthen or erode the marital commitment; and 4) increase or decrease disposable family income.*

---

The direct impact resulting from the development of water quality standards is for the protection of public health and safety and has an indirect impact on families.